



News Release

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***Salmonella* illness outbreak appears to be linked to pork**

More than 50 cases in eight Washington counties in 2015 so far

OLYMPIA — State health officials are working with state and local partners to investigate several cases and clusters of *Salmonella* infections that appear to be linked to eating pork. The ongoing investigation of at least 56 cases in eight counties around the state includes food served at a variety of events.

Disease investigators continue to explore several sources from farm to table, and are focused on an apparent link to pork consumption or contamination from raw pork. [Salmonellosis, the illness caused by infection with *Salmonella*](#), can cause severe and even bloody diarrhea, fever, chills, abdominal discomfort, and vomiting. Serious bloodstream infections may also occur.

As of July 23, the 56 cases include residents of King (44), Snohomish (4), Mason (2), Thurston (2), Pierce (1), Grays Harbor (1), Yakima (1), and Clark (1) counties. Five of the cases were hospitalized; no deaths have been reported. All were infected with the same strain of *Salmonella* bacteria. The disease investigation shows a potential exposure source for several cases was whole roasted pigs, cooked and served at private events. The source of contamination remains under investigation by state and local health officials and federal partners.

The outbreaks are a reminder of the importance of proper food care, handling, preparation, and cooking to prevent illness. State health officials recommend these food safety strategies broadly, and specifically advise against eating raw or undercooked pork.

Following [food safety guidance](#) can help prevent food-borne illness. Health officials warn consumers who handle and/or eat pork to cook the meat to a safe internal temperature, using a meat thermometer; whole cuts of pork should be cooked to 145 degrees. Meat thermometers should be placed in the thickest part of the meat, avoiding bone, fat, and cartilage.

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All meats and fish should be cooked to a safe internal temperature, using a food thermometer; [guidance can be found on the Department of Health website](#). Other food safety tips include washing hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after preparing food, especially raw meats. To avoid cross-contamination, don't place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat of any kind.

It's also important to sanitize cutting boards, knives, and countertops that come into contact with raw meat by using a solution of bleach water (1 teaspoon bleach per gallon of water) or antibacterial cleaner.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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